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Mahathir-profession

STAY AWAY FROM GRAFT, REMAIN NON-PARTISAN, PM REMINDS OFFICERS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 24 Feb (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the image of the civil service should not be tarnished by partisan and corrupt employees.

"We may think that our corrupt practice can escape detection.

"But don't be too sure as many have been severely punished," he said addressing 500 top civil servants at a premier assembly at Intan, the national institute of public administration in Bukit Kiara here today.

Dr Mahathir said professionalism should be the key determinant of an efficient administration.

"Professionalism means non-partisan service, not favouring any one side. The objective is simply to discharge our tasks," the prime minister said.

A dialogue between Dr Mahathir and the officers that followed after the premier address was also attended by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali and Public Service Director-General Tan Sri Samsudin Osman.

In his address the prime minister spoke about globalisation, the International Monetary Fund and electronic-government, among other things.

All government services in Malaysia are professional ones, including the military, which he said has always served the government of the day and has never been its role to formulate domestic or foreign policies.

"The military does not side any political party and take a stand of its own. Its loyalty is not to the commanders or other officers but to the government of the day," the prime minister said.

He said that commanders or officers issuing anti-government orders were obviously not reflecting the military's professionalism.

"Being professionals, the military does not bind itself with such orders," said Dr Mahathir.

Malaysia, he said, unlike some other countries, was spared the problem of military power tussle.

Dr Mahathir said having a professional civil service had also spared the country of problems.

He said that while civil servants may have their own political inclinations, "these personal considerations should be set aside in discharging their duties".

Dr Mahathir reminded civil servants that bribe-takers face penalties very much higher than the kickbacks they received.

"We face imprisonment and a shattered future. But being constantly mindful of this should deter us from succumbing to graft and inspire us to complete our job fast and smoothly," he said.

So long as bribe-taking did not become part of the culture, Malaysian civil servants could guarantee clean and productive service, the prime minister said.

Dr Mahathir said he was not harping on threats of globalisation to Malaysia and other developing countries to instil fear in civil servants in return for political support.

"On the other hand, what we fear have already happened," he said citing the impoverishing effects of a country's devalued currency on a rich nation.

"Perhaps those wishing for a certain government to fall will look at its collapse as desirable. But don't think the incoming government will

also be safe.

"If the alternative government does not kowtow to foreign powers, it will still be threatened and brought down as well. In other words, the country has been colonised," the prime minister said.

It is for this reason, said Dr Mahathir quoting a Malay proverb, that the civil service should be wary "not to burn the protective net out of anger at the mosquito".

Dr Mahathir added that it was crucial for civil servants to master the use of computers and the Internet to enhance performance and productivity as Malaysia was moving towards electronic-government.

-- BERNAMA

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